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WILD LIFE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION
NEW ZEALAND DEERSTALKERS ASSOCIATION
INCORPORATED

AUTUMN 1964 ISSUE 6

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AUTUMN 1964 ISSUE No. 6

AFFILIATED BRANCHES
AUCKLAND
BAY OF PLENTY
BLUE MOUNTAIN
BULLER
BUSH
CENTRAL KING COUNTRY
EASTERN BAY OF PLENTY
GORE & DISTRICTS
HAWKE'S BAY
HEADQUARTERS & OVERSEAS
HOROWHENUA
KARAMEA
MANAWATU
MANGAKINO
MARLBOROUGH
NELSON
NORTH AUCKLAND
NORTH CANTERBURY
NORTH OTAGO
NORTH TARANAKI
NORTHLAND
OTAGO
POVERTY BAY
PUKETOI
PUTARURU
RAKAIA
ROTORUA
RUAHINE
SOUTH AUCKLAND
SOUTH CANTERBURY
SOUTHLAND
SOUTH WAIRARAPA
TAIHAPE
TARANAKI
TAUPO
TE KUITI
THAMES VALLEY
UPPER HUTT
WAIKATO
WAIMARINO
WAIRARAPA
WAIROA DISTRICT
WANGANUI
WELLINGTON
WEST COAST
WESTERN SOUTHLAND
WHANGAREI

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COVER PICTURE

Two stags in Fiordland, one thought to be Wapiti, the other Red.

Photo J. Von Tunzelman

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THREE R'S FOR THE DEERSTALKER

Our organisation is undoubtedly a unique aspect of the New Zealand sporting scene.

No other body of comparable size, influence or value to the community has done so much in so short a time with so little help from outside and the fact that the N.Z.D.A. is not only still in existence but thriving is to the credit of deerstalkers themselves and to no one else.

Can another sport be named in which members must wage a continuous fight for the right to partake of their chosen recreation, go cap in hand to the bureaucracy for the "privilege" of using public land, run a national publicity campaign to counter the half-baked theories of an extremist opposition—and by no means the least formidable task—build from scratch a code of ethics which is the very antithesis of official Government policy? Surely we are unique in these respects!

Ours is a young organisation in a young country and we have no history of tradition to fall back on for guidance—no Marquis of Queensbury prescribed rules for the New Zealand deerstalker, in fact there are no rules other than those we make ourselves and no ethics in big-game hunting save those we choose to honour.

It is patently obvious that the fate of organised deerstalking is almost entirely dependent on what we think and do and we should be ever ready to study ways in which our lot may be improved for no one else will do it for us.

There are three basic tenets the honouring of which can mean continuous and enhanced success and the betrayal of which can spell our downfall.

"R" stands for Responsibility, Respect and Resolution, three precepts worthy of our constant attention and as vital to us as the presence of deer in the forests.

When deerstalkers of the future look back on what we are doing today they will not measure our achievements by the size of our trophies or the number of animals we shot. Rather will they remember us for the foundations we laid.

For we enjoy the greatest possible privilege—the responsibility of building the country's largest outdoor sporting body. We are architects in an untouched field and the patterns set today, if sound enough, could well last indefinitely.

The sport of deerstalking must be made secure for future generations for wild life is not ours to ruthlessly exploit with no thought for tomorrow. Quality of game and habitat must be a constant aim and this will constitute a never-ending task of considerable magnitude calling for the efforts of all members, a large measure of self-restraint and the exercise of a vigilant body of conscience.

It is our responsibility to put more into the sport than we take out and to leave things in better shape than we found them.

The second "R" stands for "Respect" and, above all, this implies respect for the animals themselves. There can never be any room in a stalker's vocabulary for the terms vermin and pest. Wild animals are irrevocably part of New Zealand's natural scene and they must be viewed as such, irrespective of the present infantile official outlook.

Any animal can create a problem but that should not detract from the respect due to it, and the solution of land use problems is entirely feasible within the framework of a sound code of ethics. Other countries need no hate complex to condition them to population reduction efforts—why should New Zealand?

Inevitably it is in the field when each one of us must choose whether to play the game or not. If wild animals are nothing more than targets to us then the use of the word deerstalker is hypocrisy. We should be extremely reluctant to kill more animals than can be fully utilised and when official demands are made for us to undertake large-scale reductions we in turn must demand a full explanation before acceding. There are men in the Government whose salaries are paid on the assumption that they should be able to outline to our national body the nature of a problem, demonstrate the approach required and assess the results. Unless such justification is demanded then we deserve to be treated as pawns and used as such.

Respect should also be shown for the safety, rights and property of other sections of the mountain fraternity and no matter how much we disagree with the laws affecting deerstalking or fight for their amendment, they must be honoured in their present form—we shall not enjoy the respect and confidence of the public if we are deliberate law-breakers.

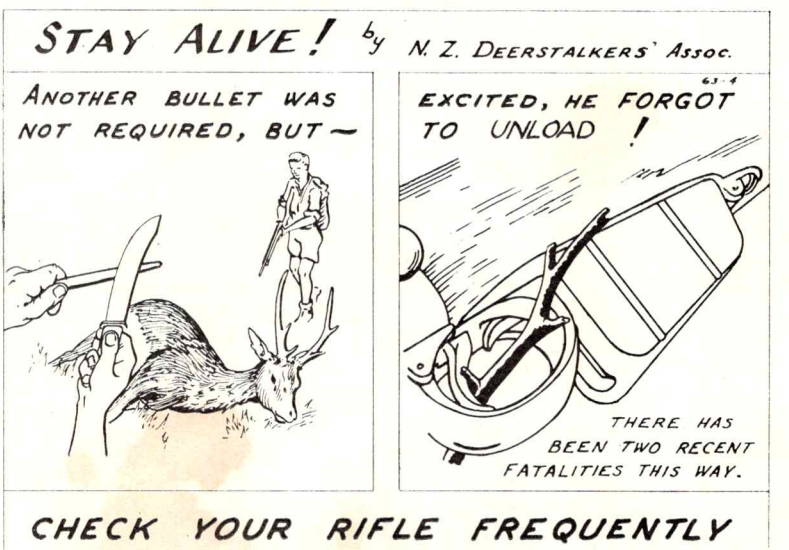
So to the third "R"—Resolution! By this we imply tenacity of purpose—the will to fight for our principles and never to surrender them. In the climate prevailing today, deerstalkers can serve but one master—their association—and we must face the fact that one of our main functions has been and will always be that of a pressure group.

We must resolve to offer the coming generation of stalkers a better philosophy than that of extermination, to break the unethical wild animal apartheid outlook which sets out piously to protect some forms of nature and with equal piety to destroy others. It is impossible to base a code of ethics on these two extreme viewpoints and just as hopeless to think that young people can be safely educated to respect one animal and hate another.

Resolution on our part will do more to usher in a new outlook in conservation than will politicians, law draughtsmen and Government officials together and by such efforts we shall ensure that the day will come when there will be deer other than bad deer.

In the meantime let us keep the three "R's" of deerstalking uppermost in our thoughts and assuredly we shall not fail.

—J.B.H.


STAY ALIVE! by N. Z. DEERSTALKERS' ASSOC.
ANOTHER BULLET WAS NOT REQUIRED, BUT—
EXCITED, HE FORGOT TO UNLOAD!
THERE HAS BEEN TWO RECENT FATALITIES THIS WAY.
CHECK YOUR RIFLE FREQUENTLY

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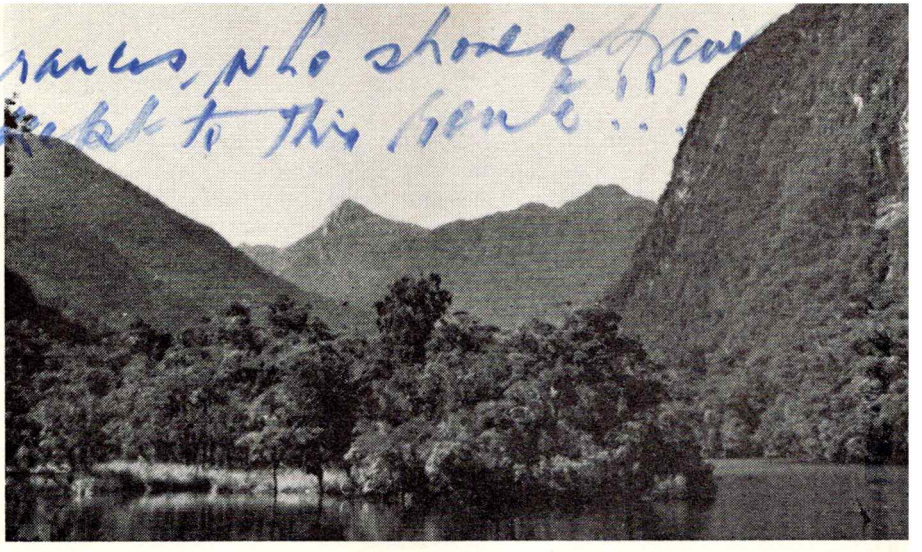

Photo F. Tully.

Looking up the George River from the River Mouth.

SOUTH AND WEST FOR WAPITI

By Frank Tully

On March 18, an overladen Volkswagen from Nelson rolled through the Homer Tunnel and down to Milford Sound and Dick Hobbs, Stan Jones and I stepped out.

We stamped around to uncrease and Stan, a West Coaster, put his nose in the air and ambled quickly into the South West Bar, a favoured watering place in that area and probably breaking even with Mitre Peak as an attraction.

We downed a quick one and sought out Henry Buchanan, skipper of the boat which would take us into Block 16, George River.

After a large meal at the A.A. Camp with Henry and the crew, we went aboard "Bonita".

Built for the crayfish trade with a refrigerator capacity of nine tons and winches for pulling the large square pots of steel frame and netting, she was a sturdy craft of about 35 ft. and very beamy. With a crew of three she spent about three months each season in the Sounds.

On deck was a box of ugly, brown mottled fish, known locally as "boof-heads", their eyes are turned heavenwards and they are said to wriggle into the mud on the sea bottom and swallow anything that falls into their huge mouths.

We crawled into our sleeping bags. At 3.30 a.m. the big diesel throbbed—we were on our way; but as soon as we hit the open sea there came a rocking and rolling that set the landlubbers reaching for the rail. Henry pulled into Anita Bay for shelter. They mined greenstone there in earlier times.

Next morning we made it and sailed south in a heavy swell the land dark and forbidding in the dawn sky.

Past Transit Beach and Sutherland Sound—there is a dangerous bar at the mouth and some Blenheim shooters had a rough time there some years ago.

The cook turned on a good stew and I braced myself in the cabin, three platefuls in my hands and yelled for my mates to take theirs. They turned pale and scrambled on deck to hang over the rail. I juggled in vain, the stew left the plates and plastered the walls. The cook bared his teeth and gave us bread and cheese—I didn't feel so good myself.

Five hours out from Milford, we turned into George Sound and quiet anchorage. At the mouth of the George river, over the side went the dinghy, two trips and we stood by our stores and equipment on the shore.

The "Bonita" swung away, cameras clicked. For three weeks this place was ours. We shouldered our packs, covered our faces and hands with insect repellent, and pushed inland for a mile through heavy bush, crossed the river, and established base-camp. A large tarpaulin as a fly, a tent to sleep in, and a fireplace out front, with ample space for the drying of wood and clothing.

For two days heavy rain fell, and the river was flooded, but we chopped and stored wood, and made things snug generally; stores off the ground and everything in plastic bags to keep out the damp.

The third day came fine as we packed a week's food and headed up river.

Our frame packs weighed around 60 lb. and we wore sou'-westers and Japara jackets, woollen clothes and socks, nylon shorts and specially nailed boots. Each of us had a rifle and camera, and felt like a pack-horse.

We followed a faint game track, crossing and re-crossing the river. There were laughs when someone fell into deep water, but relief when he scrambled out unhurt. Sweat ran down faces, water squelched from boots, on and on over logs and boulders and around windfalls. We stopped and boiled the billy—it was raining again.

From high up in the misty bush came the high pitched bugle of the bull Wapiti, and a man's heart beat a little faster and he thrust more strongly along the rough track, and the water cascaded from the trees.

Photo F. Tully.

The author glassing the tops.

Darkness came as we pitched the pup tent on a rock, out of reach of the hungry river; a meal of rice and soup, the billy of tea, then into the sleeping bags. Sleep came quickly, blue ducks called along the river and kiwis whistled.

Daybreak, breakfast, pack the gear, and off again.

The treasured rifle became a support in the swift river, a walking stick around the steep gorges, and a damned nuisance in the undergrowth.

Stan cleaned the mud out of the barrels and oiled them each night.

We shot a Wapiti cow on the river bank for meat; and camped under a hanging rock the second night. Next morning, we broke camp and it was still raining.

We could now see the mist-shrouded mountain tops and the white of waterfalls and some hours later we scrambled around the last fall, and out into a tussock basin; and the rain stopped and the sun shone, and we could hear the distant bugle of the bulls, and somehow the pack lightened.

We took photographs all around.

Suddenly from a nearby peak came a long clear bugle. High on the ridge was a bull, and as we watched, he turned, and his antlers stood out against the sky.

He thrust his head forward to bugle again, and his top tines came back over his rump; two cows joined him, then all three disappeared over the rim of the ridge.

First shot was to go to either Stan or Dick, so I pulled two leaves from a mountain daisy. Stan drew the long one. It was his shot.

Photo F. Tully.

Stan and the bull—where he fell.

But we were all so tired we stumbled a little as we climbed, and stopped more often.

We came upon a small lake. Couldn't we camp and go after him tomorrow?

But for a head like that there is no tomorrow, we seemed to be climbing into the sky, but dusk found us on the ridge, and the bull was not in sight.

The ridge sloped off south-west and seemed to bluff off into the bush, an old bull would not put himself in a corner.

To the North and West?

A steep slope ran into a rocky basin. I scrambled to the edge, and a cow stood lower down. The bull had to be there; and he was, and he bugled again and even in the poor light his mighty rack was easily seen. Fourteen points, and I had never seen his like before.

Stan sneaked down beside me, he dumped his pack and started down.

I watched him as he tried to cross a steep gut, failed, and moved further down.

He came into view again, then started back. Hell, would he never get across?

The old cow was watching me and I moved my hands to keep her occupied, and Stan appeared on the other side of the gut. He crept to the rocky outcrop and a shot echoed down the valley. Dick gave a shout from a vantage point above and I knew that the bull was down.

The tension eased, and I picked up Stan's pack and scrambled down to shake his hand.

The Western 180 grain bullet had dropped the animal like a log.

The head measured 53½ inches long and 50 inches wide, the points were strong and the timber heavy.

It was raining again, but we did not give a damn.

I skinned out the neckskin while my mates rigged a camp under a huge rock, not very comfortable but we were too tired and happy to care.

Around 10 a.m. the rain stopped, and we broke camp, loaded with an extra sixty pounds of head and headskin we climbed across the head of the basin, used a rope on one steep section, and finally crested a ridge to look into the next watershed.

A young bull came down to see us, got our wind and bolted around the mountain.

We pitched camp by a beautiful lake; it was late, and the last rays of the sun struck gold on the peaks all about.

Day broke wonderfully fine and we made good use of the wood available to dry out our wet gear; and took a dozen colour shots of the head and the terrific view all around.

I took the camera and climbed along the ridge and over the nearby peak to find a way off it.

It bluffed to the west but there was a way along the main ridge and some likely looking places for the animals to feed.

Three bulls bugled way round the basin as I climbed over the tops and down to camp.

After breakfast Dick and I took rifles and camera and set off leaving Stan to clean up the head and fix a meal for our return.

It was rough going, we scrambled through leather-leaf and stunted beech for an hour, then broke out and climbed on to the tussock ridge above.

Far below was a lake in the heavy bush, and a bull bugled. We called him and went down but he was too far away, so we returned to the ridge and scanned a ribbonwood basin with the glasses. We sighted a bull and a cow, he was a twelve pointer, but not big enough.

Another bull was bugling further over but he was a thousand feet below and it was getting late.

We headed for camp, Stan saw us coming over the top and the billy was boiling when we came home.

There was two days food left and we were now somewhat overloaded and could not afford to get caught in a storm so high and far from base, so camp was broken and we headed around the mountain on the long haul to the sound.

Being the tallest, I took the antlers. Stan took my rifle and the headskin, and Dick was loaded with the extras. Bearded and dirty, we ambled down a long ridge, somewhat fearful of the inevitable drop-off to the river.

Antlers, packs and rifles caught on every tree, rotten logs collapsed under us, and we occasionally hung by our hands as footholds gave way, but in two hours we made the floor of the valley then pressed on until dark, to camp on the bank of the river.

Next morning we made an early start, found easier ways through the gorges than we had on the trip up-river, and hit base camp by 3 p.m.

Out came the big biscuits and honey and we boiled the billy and salted the headskin.

The smell of smoke, food and gun-oil and the massive antlers propped against a nearby tree.

Life was good.

Next day we had a shave and clean-up and were busy with camp chores when Dick, who had been chopping wood, limped in to the tent, blood streaming through a cut in his light camp shoe.

Quickly we took it off, a bad cut, but it stopped bleeding as we applied antiseptic and bandaged it.

Dick was out of action for some days at least; so Stan and I set off to hunt a big creek running West.

It was still fine and we made good time, a couple of bulls bugled and I went up and looked at them—young animals with poor antlers.

We camped late just below the head of the valley and rain came with the darkness.

Within an hour the wind was a hurricane, then came hail and snow, and the murmur of the nearby stream changed to a roar.

For two days and nights we lay in the 7 x 4 ft. tent, eating dry rations and cursing the hard ground.

On the third day the storm eased, and it took over two hours concentrated effort to boil the precious billy with wet wood.

We moved to a tussock basin higher up, pitched the tent and dried out before a good fire of turpentine scrub, we swung the billy three time before retiring, and slept soundly on a good bed of mountain spruce, and next morning the sun glittered on the melting snow.

We packed light rations, camera and rifle, and climbed to a high spot for a good look around. A young bull grazed on the tussock flat below and two others bugled high in the bush.

We answered them and climbed across, getting quite close.

One animal had a strangely grown head, bow tines almost two feet long, the other was an even twelve, but small.

Frozen hail packed on to our boots as we got higher, and feet ached with the cold.

Another hour, and we warmed ourselves in the sun on the ridge, a wonderful panorama of mountains all about, but our way

to the north was barred by steep bluffs. We took photographs, boiled the billy, and turned for camp, arriving at dark.

That night we sat up late, listening to the bugling of the bulls, yarning of the places we had been, and the good mates we knew, and when younger, had hunted smaller game.

There was a light frost that night, we arose early and looked into a valley running into Bligh Sound. No game, but we photographed a beautiful lake and returned to camp.

To avoid firing shots and scaring the bigger animals, we had smoked an eel, which we ate with our rice, it was fine protein, but four days of it brought on biliousness and hatred of the fish family generally.

We had covered the ground and were getting hungry, so we packed up and swung a last billy of tea.

A loud bugle nearby shook us somewhat, and Dick limped in, loaded with food.

The sandflies and the loneliness had bothered him and during the storm a six foot lump of tree had come down, almost wrecking the fly, and missing him by a few feet. So he had limped after us, taking two days on the way.

We re-bandaged his foot, ate the biscuits and honey he had brought, and started back. We camped at the base of a big slip, and took a look around, there were no animals. The night was frosty, and the occasional call of a lonely bull broke the Big Stillness.

The weather held fine as we trekked down-river, a young bull bugled very near, and I sneaked up to photograph him at ten yards, while he watched my mates.

On the flats nearby we had often crossed the big hoof marks of what must be a large bull, and as we cooked a meal some animal bugled across the river.

I answered him, and he kept calling. Dick took a rifle and sneaked off. I struck a high note, and he went into a frenzy, bugling and crashing towards the camp.

A shot, then two more, and Stan and I raced to the riverbank to see a huge yellowish beast roll over in midstream.

It was Old Big-Hoof. His head malformed, his hide paper thin with age, hung loose on his huge frame.

He was the father of the herd in this wild and lonely place, we had seen the same antler characteristics in half a dozen bulls.

A younger male had taken his cows, his worn teeth could no longer provide the food he needed. Death would have come slowly in winter, it had come quickly now.

We returned rather silently to camp, in the gathering darkness, and somewhere high in the bush, a young bull bugled, long and clear.

The "Bonita" was due in four days time. It was too short for a further trip, so we shifted camp to the shore of the sound and caught a few fish from the rocks.

On the morning of the 9th, I was hunting a bull above camp when a couple of shots brought me back. The boat had arrived.

Two other shooting parties were aboard, with some fair trophies. But when Stan's head came aboard, someone said, "When a man get one like that, he can hang up his boots."

We took a last look at the awful beauty all about, in some strange way it seemed to be calling us.

The "Bonita" gathered speed.

Young men and an old gun.—Two visitors from New Zealand pause to admire the Winchester Model 95 at the Winchester Gun Museum in New Haven, Conn. The rifle is the type used by former President Theodore Roosevelt on hunting trips to Africa. The visitors are brothers Malcolm and Peter MacCaw of HakataremeaValley, South Canterbury (left and centre). Thomas E. Hall, the museum's curator, looks on. The museum containing one of the world's outstanding collections of small arms is visited by sportsmen from all over the world each year.

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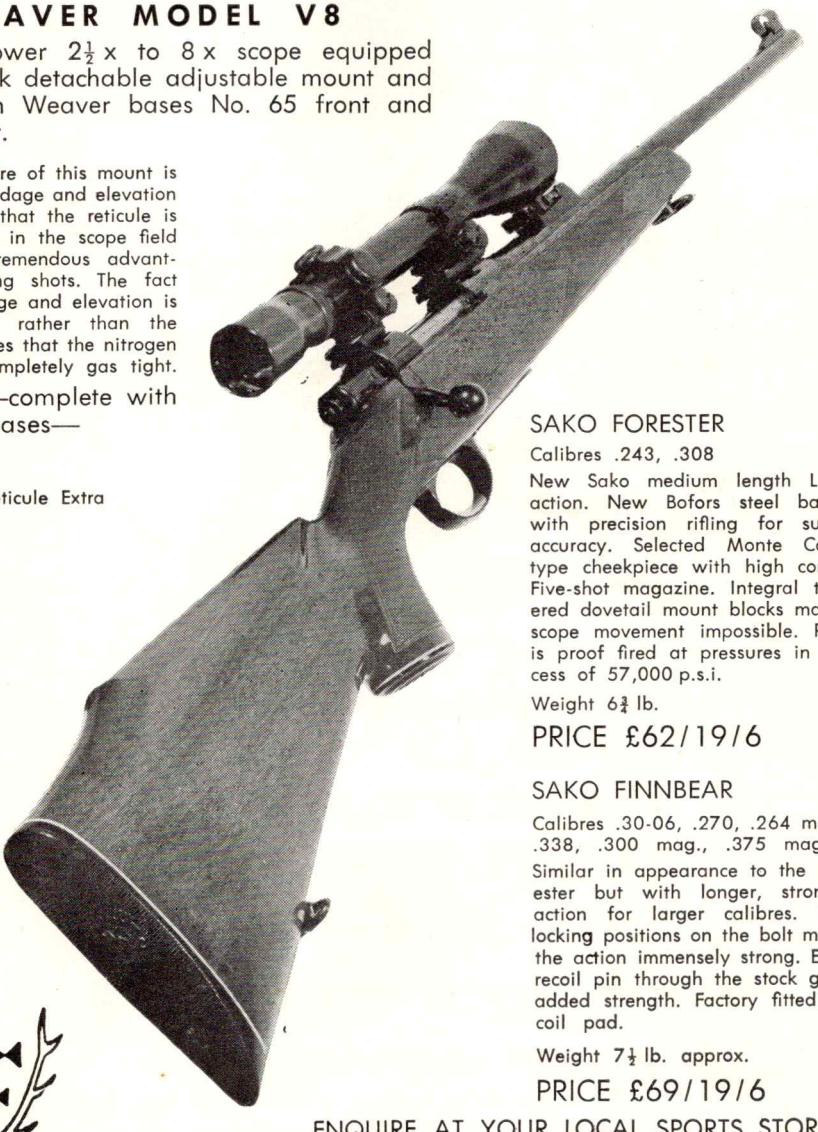

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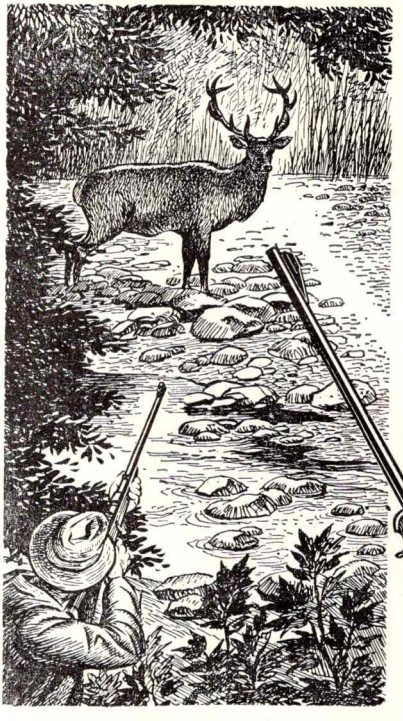

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Photo M. Soper

THE KAKAPO

By Dr. R. A. Falla

The Kakapo is a well-disguised member of the parrot family. It is a large bird with mossy green plumage and a disc of hairy feathers about the face that gives it some resemblance to an owl. From this, and the fact that it is nocturnal, it has sometimes been known as the Owl Parrot. It is one of the native birds of

New Zealand which has become much reduced in numbers and in distributional range since the impact of European civilisation and the great changes that have taken place in the vegetation of the country. From abundant bones it is clear that Kakapo were once found throughout the North, South and Stewart Islands as well as the Chathams at all altitudes. Today, the known range of Kakapo is restricted to the western part of Fiordland and possibly West Nelson. In these areas it inhabits beech forest and adjacent snow-grass, and in at least one locality where it is known to exist there is a good deal of irregular and loose rocks which may provide it with temporary shelter. Like many flightless birds the Kakapo owes its survival to nocturnal and secretive habits and for that reason very little is known about its life history, its range of movement, or its habits generally.

When Kakapo were still common they provided food for parties of Maori hunters, and later for the prospectors and explorers of the European era. The collecting mania of the last century, which was more commercial than scientific, accounted for many more; but it must finally have been the successive invasions of rats, of cats and dogs, as well as stoats, that brought about the near-extinction of Kakapo. Quite apart from the fact that it cannot fly it seems to be much more vulnerable than, for example, the Kiwi and the Weka which are quite abundant in the same kind of country, and clearly have effective means of defending themselves and their nests and eggs.

A few years ago, the Wildlife Division, Department of Internal Affairs, following a policy of studying rare native birds in captivity, captured two or three male Kakapo in a valley in the neighbourhood of Milford Sound. The single survivor of this experiment is, at the time of writing, still in good health and gives each night an active demonstration of its feeding preferences and of its nocturnal routine. This bird has a voracious apetite and shows many changes of preference for different plants at different times. Leaves, both tender and fibrous, are eaten and in most cases only the juices appear to be extracted while the residual fibre is spat out in a characteristic loose mass. Occasionally leaves of tough snow grass or flax are chewed down without being detached and the frayed out portions remain on the plant. The presence of vegetation in this condition and the existence of well-beaten and carefully trimmed tracks about 10 inches wide are a fair indication of the presence of Kakapo in a district. Sometimes the evidence is more direct with stray feathers being found or the dry scoops usually referred to as "dusting bowls". Even when no birds are seen such indications should be carefully noted and reported as it is only in this way that the present distribution range of this rare flightless parrot can be determined.

The Game Management And Research Organisation Of The N.Z. Deerstalkers' Assn.

By John B. Henderson

PART 2

(Readers should refer to Issue 5 of "N.Z. Wild Life" for the preliminary discussion of data collecting and diagrams of the Field Card.)

How We Use Data

On completion of field cards, they are sent to either your Branch Secretary for forwarding on, or directly to the National Secretary, Box 263, Wellington, or to Box 2148, Wellington. In each case, your card will end up in the possession of G.M. & R. Committee where your information will be transferred to punch cards for storing and processing.

Let us consider now how the data is used.

The date on which you make a kill is of great importance as many of the other sections are only useful to us when related to a time of the year.

Sex and age records give us a picture of herd structure, i.e. whether the sex ratio is 90 stags per 100 hinds or 100/100, or whether the proportion of immature animals to mature is 100/100 or significantly different. For example, a deer herd possessing a marked preponderence of hinds is potentially a far greater "producer" of deer than one "loaded" with stags. If a high proportion of immature animals is found this may well indicate vigorous population growth permitting heavy harvesting whilst a low proportion may indicate an ageing herd displaying no numerical increase at all.

Under the heading "antlers" we seek information on the state of the antler and its height and span. The velvet, casting and hard phases measure the hormonal changes in stags whilst the height and span combined as a symmetry index (height divided by span x 100) can be used as an indication of localisation of deer because of its linkage with inheritance. Actual growth of antler tissue and bone is also a measure of the quality we are trying to build into our trophy herds.

The state of a hind's udder is of great importance. If she is carrying milk (i.e. wet) it means she is or has been very recently feeding a fawn. If she is dry, she is either barren, pregnant or has lost her fawn. Keeping a tab on the ratio of wet to dry

udders throughout the months of a year will show us the pattern of fawn mortality.

Records of unborn fawns (embryos) provide us with pregnancy success figures which, when combined with wet/dry udder ratios measures the dynamics of population growth (if any).

The condition of an animal killed is either rated visually (see diagrams) or is measured by weighing the kidney fat and comparing this with the weight of the cleaned kidney. Animal condition is of vital importance in the production of high class trophies—starving stags don't produce great heads.

The collector notes in which of five classes of habitat he shot his deer. This information tells us of a particular species preference and we can often obtain seasonal movement data from this category.

The name of the locality is important in many ways which will be obvious to the reader.

By recording the "field hours", i,e, the actual time taken *hunting* before a kill is made we can obtain a measure of deer availability (or density) and also of hunter success which may well be closely linked.

On side two in the small recording panel it will be seen that we weigh the testicles of stags. This measures sperm production and helps us to date the rut.

The length of the hind leg (hock to toe) is taken in preference to judging body size as it has been shown that there is a strong relationship between the two, especially in growing animals. Similarly, the leg length of an embryo measures its size or stage of advancement.

That completes a description of our data collection scheme and it only remains for me to remind all members of N.Z.D.A. that by collecting this information they immediately begin to add to their knowledge of the animals they hunt.

They also assist the Association in a very valuable way to add to its central research records. This scheme produced the information from which the publication *Himalayan Thar in New Zealand* resulted, and if readers want to see how we use data collection records, they can obtain copies of this publication from the National Secretary (10/- post paid).

Game Management and Research go together—we cannot hope to manage herds unless we know a good deal about them. These two related activities are operated by N.Z.D.A. members for the benefit of N.Z.D.A. members—are you willing to do your share?

Data cards can be obtained from your branch secretary—why not give it a trial?—the interest you get out of it may surprise you!

A Guide To Westland

By Lew Sutherland

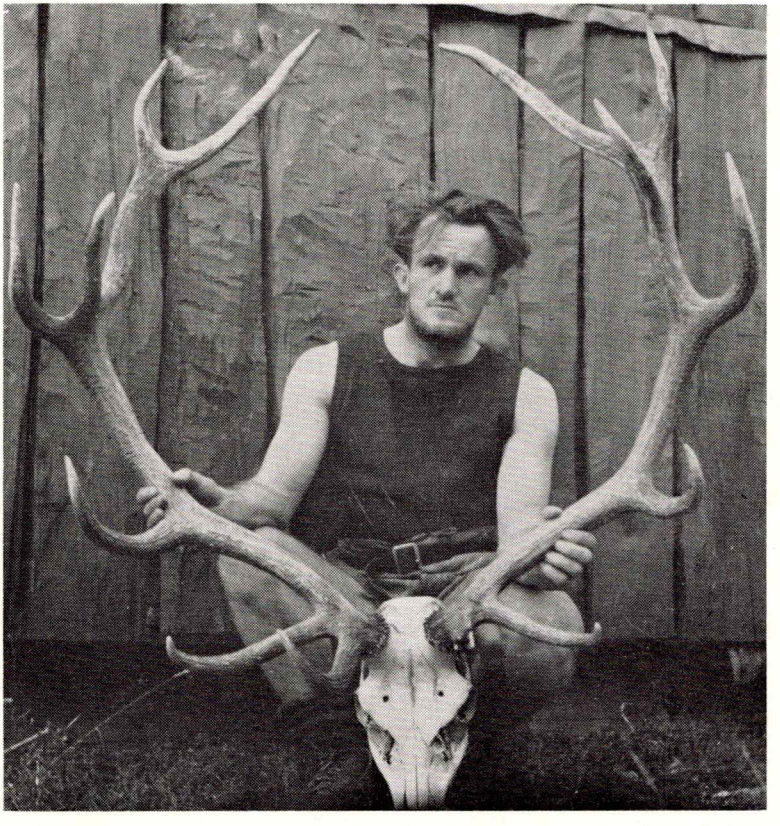


Photo P. Lyes.

P. Lyes N.Z. record for length Red Stag from the Cropp Spur in the Whitcombe.

THE KAKAPOTAHI OR LITTLE WAITAHA

The Happy Valley of Westland, the Little Waitaha, the Kakapotahi, or the Gordon are the names appended to this rarely mentioned bush valley lying south of the Mikonui Valley.

There are good river flats, both grass and bush.

There is a medium but excellent population of deer in the valley particularly further towards the headwaters and on the Mikonui side. A splendid seventeen pointer was taken by Percy Lyes in 1955, which he described as probably the heaviest sets of antlers he had ever bagged.

Apart from local hunters the valley is rarely visited and an expedition about the "Roar" would certainly be enjoyable and perhaps gain you that trophy.

Bush saddles connect with Gribben Flats in the Mikonui, but these routes should only be attempted by competent bushmen. The Dickie Spur route to the headwaters of the Tuke and Waitaha is also accessible from the Kakapotahi Valley.

Permission to shoot there and to use the hut is required from J. Ferguson of the Waitaha Valley.

Track Information

Follow the Farm Road on the north side of the Waitaha School and it leads directly onto the sheep track that climbs and sidles over into the Little Waitaha Valley where good flats and a hut will be found. There is good hunting in the creeks and bush with excellent morning and evening shooting on the flats.

Follow the river to the headwaters alternating between difficult river bed going and bush, and a camp site will be found on the west bank in the headwaters.

Travelling Times

From the Waitaha School to the hut, 2 hours; from the hut to the headwaters, one full day.

THE WAITAHA VALLEY

This is chamois country at its best; lofty mountain peaks, glaciers and rushing ice-fed torrents combine with a heavy density of chamois to offer a challenge that must be answered only by a party led by an experienced bushman/hunter.

Although a track was cut through to the County stream confluence in 1951, the lower reaches of the valley are difficult, and with the track becoming overgrown, care should be taken in following the blazes.

Above the County stream, a high-level route on the south bank of the Waitaha is recommended, as the Waitaha rises swiftly above the County confluence creating the usual obstacles of gorge and cataract. From the grassline in headwaters of the County a sidle of the Bloomfield range leads into the beautiful tussock basin

at the head of the Waitaha. There is a saddle in the County that connects with the Smythe River in the Wanganui Valley also.

It is in country such as the Waitaha Valley, that the hunter can cast a critical eye over the mature chamois bucks before selecting his trophy, for 10 inches horns are common, and 11 inches to 12 inches ones should be the prize of the patient hunter. It is interesting to note that the tracks of wandering stags have been observed in the headwaters of the Waitaha by chamois hunters.

Wild goats are present in the bush of the front country, although the horns do not grow to any great size.

Track Information

An overgrown track holds to the south bank as far as the County stream confluence, push through to the grassline of the County and sidle the Bloomfield Range into the headwaters. There are no huts in the valley, and few established routes to the tops, with the exception of the blazed track on to the Smythe Range from the front country as mentioned under Wanganui Valley, and the Hitchin Range, which is a chamois hunting ground and another difficult route to the headwaters, being reached by a tracked spur on the north side of Anderson Creek in the front country.

Travelling Times

It would be two days swagging at least to reach the County confluence from the road end, and another day to reach the headwaters.

Contact J. Ferguson of Waitaha for permission to travel over his property in entering the valley itself.

THE WANGANUI AND POERUA VALLEYS

Here in the beautiful Wanganui Valley is a stronghold of the chamois.

The Wanganui River is swift flowing, being fed by extensive ice fields and high mountain ranges, while the bush is dense rain forest. Travelling alternates between bush tracks and river flats and is fairly easy to Plover Flats, but then becomes rough especially the newly cut track to the headwaters of the Adams River.

Red deer are present in the valley although colonisation has been slow, owing to the barriers of ridge and river and also because of the absence of hunting pressure in neighbouring valleys. It has only been in recent years that deer have become more noticeable and the chances of gaining an outstanding trophy here is very promising indeed. A heavy sixteen pointer, which had un-

fortunately gone back in condition, was shot on Plover Flats by K. Gedling of Australia in 1957.

Light red deer populations are present in the bush close to the flats at the mouth of Hot Springs Creek and also along the north-east bank of the Wanganui from the front country to just above the Lambert confluence. Deer are across the Wanganui at this point, and another decade will see them on the tussock slopes of the Blue Lookout.

The remote and spectacular hanging valley at the head of the Adams River has been opened by a track on its south bank, and makes possible a round trip embracing the Wanganui/Adams/Hot Springs Creek and North Poerua Valleys in that or the opposite order.

The Poerua Valley has only been partly explored in recent years and consideration of the rough and steep country to be encountered should be given, even though the temptation of the high standard of chamois horns feels irresistible.

Track Information

From the main highway, take the north-east bank of the Wanganui River to the Powerhouse and swing bridge over Stege Creek and continue through bush tracks and riverbed until the cage over the Wanganui above the Lambert confluence is reached, the river at most times can be forded below the cage; two bluffs will be encountered on the route but both are well tracked, although care should be taken so that the entrances are not bypassed. Hunters hut is situated in the bush on the south bank below the cage with the main track holding to the south bank to the Smythe confluence below the grassline; a flying fox spans the Wanganui just above the Smythe confluence. A good saddle at the head of the east branch of the Smythe leads to the County stream in the Waitaha Valley. All the sources of the Wanganui River can be shot from the Smythe confluence in a day with the possibility of thar being seen, especially in the Evans River; two bulls were encountered there in 1957 with one being shot; chamois are of course plentiful.

The track to the Adams and Lord Valleys leaves the main track fifty yards above Hunters Hut and leads up the Lambert River (Lambert walk track) the turn-off to the Blue Lookout is at Benighted Creek, which should be followed up until it narrows and a rock cairn located, where the track will be seen to lead up the bank and on to a spur that lies to the south; this is the route to the Lord Valley; a sidle around the tussock from the Blue Lookout speedily brings a wonderful view of the Lambert Ice-Fall

and the fantastic gorge that seems to be completely overgrown in some sections. Thar are very likely to be present high up on the south side of the Lord River close to the Lambert ice-fall.

To reach the headwaters of the Adams Valley, the cage spanning the Lambert at the mouth of the gorge is used, and the track on the south west of the Adams River followed to the headwaters; the Adams must be forded above the Eblis Gorge just at the foot of the Adams Flats and great care must be taken; if the river is too high or too rapid, traverse the south-west bank over one bluff and ford the river close to the terminal face of the Adams ice-fall. A track to the basins on Mt. Lambert leaves the Adams Valley track an easy half-hour from the cage over the Lambert River and is indicated by a large arrow carved into a tree; the track ends at the first patch of snow grass and a short struggle is necessary to reach the open tops where a reasonable rock camp will be found in the largest of the basins; to reach the head of the Adams from here, cross the hanging creek that drops sheer into the Adams just above the Eblis Gorge, climb a few hundred feet to a dry creek bed, and carefully descend.

The leading spur lying north of Boulder-pool Creek connects with Speculation Ridge, which is the route to Hot Springs Creek and the North Poerua Valley. From the front country, the route to the Wilberg Range and the North Poerua vit Mt. Ferguson, is by an old sheep track that is marked by a blaze on a dead matai tree behind Hende's farm just south of the Wanganui bridge. The rock cairn on top of Mt. Ferguson was built by Charlie Douglas and Billy Gunn many years ago.

The route to the headwaters of the North Poerua River is by either of the two creeks lying beneath the rock cairn on Mt. Ferguson but it is rough. To reach Speculation Ridge from the North Poerua, a steep spur which demands great care lies on the north-east bank below the terminal face of the glacier and leads to a pass that connects with Speculation Ridge which is the route into the Wanganui Valley.

Travelling Times

From the Road Bridge to Hunter's Hut at the Lambert confluence, 5 hours; from Hunter's Hut to the Smythe confluence, 4 hours; from the Smythe confluence to each source of the headwaters is about an hour; from Hunter's Hut to the cage at the mouth of the Lambert Gorge is approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ hour, there is a rumour that this cage is down, if this is so, then difficult fords below the gorge must be used, they have been used previously but care is needed, and a rope used; from the mouth of the Lambert Gorge to the Adams Flats, 6 hours.

Photo Orrs Studio

J. S. McLUNIES 1963—8-POINT SIKA

From Puketitiri

LENGTH: L. 32¼", R. 33¼".
SPREAD: 25".
SPAN: 19¼".
BEAM: L. 4⅜", R. 4⅜".
CORONET: L. 7", R. 7".
BROW: L. 10⅞", R. 10½".
TREZ: L. 8", R. 6¼".
INNER TOPS: L. 5¾", R. 8".
OUTER TOPS: L. 15⅝", R.15½".
DOUGLAS SCORE: 207½.

Photo N. Lockhead

N. LOCKHEADS 1962—16-POINT RED DEER

From Barrier River

LENGTH: L. 42″, R. 41¾″.
SPREAD: 36½″.
SPAN: 28½″.
BEAM: L. 7⅛″, R. 6¾″.
CORONETS: L. 9¾″, R. 9⅝″.
BROW: L. 14⅛″, R. 14¼″.
BEZ: L. 10″, R. 11⅛″.
TREZ: L. 11¾″, R. 12″.
ROYAL: L. 9⅜″, R. 12″.
OUTER ROYAL: L. 6⅜″, R. 4¾″.
BACK: L. 17″, R. 20¼″.
OUTER OFF-BACK: L. 4½″, R. 9⅜″.
INNER OFF-BACK: L. 9⅝″, R. 12⅜″.
DOUGLAS SCORE 343¼.

Photo W. Anderson

"Dad and Ian as they looked up the Valley towards the Junction where Inaccessible Creek joins the McDougall Branch."

NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1963

EDITOR'S NOTE.—*A letter to the Editor with a difference.*

Dear Ian,

I am Billy Anderson, a fourteen-year-old Junior Member of the South Canterbury Branch of the N.Z.D.A. I was one of thirty-two members of the Association engaged in survey and culling operations in the Wapiti area last summer and thought you might like to know what I thought about it.

To most of us, the midnight departure from the "Te Anau Downs" wharf on the "Tarewa" had been novelty enough—but this had dwindled into insignificance soon after the sound of the ship's motors had faded into the night. We were left on a rocky beach under the overhanging bush. There were eight of us—five for the Midburn tops and we three for the Lugarburn. It was pitch dark with no moon and it took some time before we realised that we had been put ashore half a mile west of the Lugar burn camp site.

It took nearly an hour of slipping on wet rocks, wading round fallen trees and tripping over roots before we transferred our gear to the proper camp site. We pitched camp, had a quick brew and

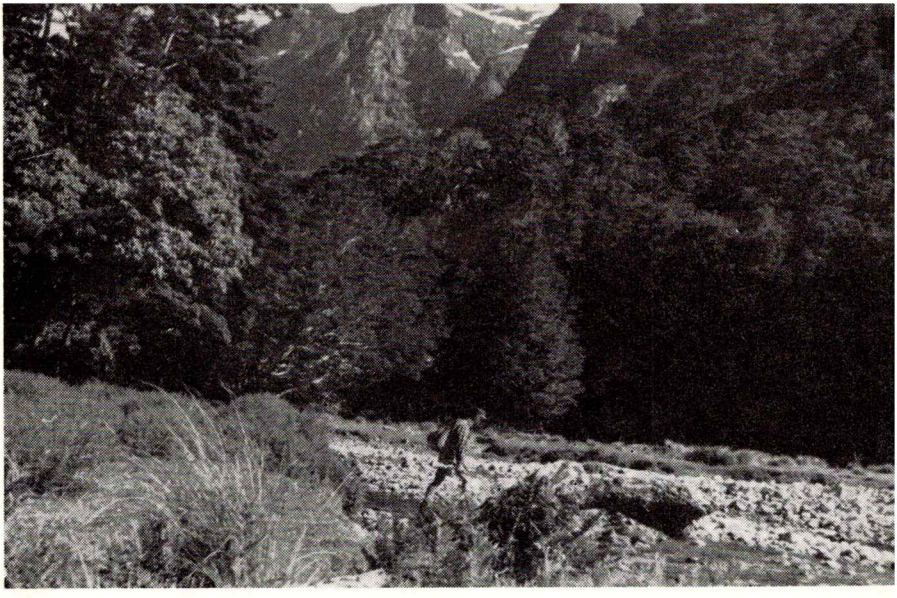


Photo W. Anderson

Heading for the tops in the background.

it must have been near daylight when we turned in. Mosquitoes, and later sandflies wouldn't let Dad rest and he roused us out at dawn for breakfast.

Seven o'clock found us with packs up heading up the Lugarburn flats through the crown fern. There were one or two tricky river crossings below the Lugarburn gorge and after a stiff climb round this we stopped for lunch—bully beef, bread and butter, and tea without milk—by an old hut made of railway tarpaulins. Ian and I thought the going so far had been tough enough but of the fording and the struggling through the main gorge of the Macdougall branch later, the least said the better. Our packs got heavier as the day wore on and there seemed to be twice as many vines and lawyers tangling in them. Each hill seemed higher than the last and it was with some relief that we collapsed under the stunted birch bush on top of a rocky outcrop from where we got our first view of the valley headwaters. The snow grass tops were a welcome sight after the hours of bush travel. I took a photo of Dad and Ian as they looked up the valley towards the junction where Inaccessible Creek joins the Macdougall branch. It was here that we were now camped. Yesterday we had visited Canyon Creek, today we hoped to see the Henderson Burn and the Wapiti River.

Dawn broke early, only about three hours after midnight. The rattling and tapping of keas at the frying pan brought mem-

Photo W. Anderson

"We took turns in kicking steps"

ories of yesterday—the sleeping bag, the green of the tent, the roar of the creek. Somewhere a weka called; this was no morning to stay in bed. We dressed quickly and while Dad lit the fire I went down to the creek to get water and the meat which we had put in a pool for safety from the keas and flies. Hurrying back to camp where smoke was rising I was startled when a small bird flew out of the crown of a fern at my feet. Curiosity made me stop to look and in the centre of the fern I found a small nest with four blue eggs. I think it was a Waxeye's nest.

The sun broke over the rim as we ate breakfast and the flies were terrific. I don't know how many hundreds attacked the frying pan but they were two or three deep all over the bottom of it. They kept zooming into my tea and at one time I had to take seven out. It was either them or us so we ignored them but didn't open our mouths any wider than necessary. The sandflies had vanished, there just wasn't room for both in the air.

Trees steamed in the sun as we picked our way through them. High above hung a steep snowfield and little did I think that we would be kicking steps up it later. Whitefrost glistened on the flats and patches of morning mist rose slowly from the valley floor. We followed the creek, crossing several small clearings known as the Macdougall branch flats and two swampy areas. Jumping over a small stream, I frightened out a blue mountain duck which was hiding under some tree roots, and a little further on we found two old wapiti heads. As we climbed through bush to the foot of a waterfall we saw a wapiti cow and its calf moving silently through

Photo W. Anderson

Glassing the tops for Wapiti.

some ribbonwood. At the foot of the falls there was a small clearing and from it we glassed the benches above.

High up, under a rocky bluff we could see a bull with its velvet antlers as it lay on a bench. A hundred yards to the right four cows were feeding. We climbed round the waterfall and up a rock shute hoping to get close enough to the bull to photograph him, but unfortunately the wind changed and the cows gave the alarm. One of them persisted in barking long after it was out of sight. Crossing a rocky bench to our right we climbed through a gorge which led to a hanging basin where we boiled the billy for lunch. While there we glassed the hill and saw four cows and a calf climb and disappear over the skyline. When we moved off, we found we had to climb another rock bluff from the top of which we again saw the mob of cows and a calf. They were sneaking back into the basin at bush level having circled the spur and apparently waited for us to leave. We were well above the snow grass now getting into rock and scree where there were patches of snow. The snow was melting fast. Between the rock, streams of water from the melting snow were running everywhere and mountain buttercups and daisies flowered. Rock scrambling led us to the bottom of the snowfield and though it hadn't looked very big from the valley floor it now looked tremendous. Zig-zagging, we took turns kicking steps heading for a break in the summit rocks; a slip here could have been disastrous with the bluffs below.

The summit rocks were steep but free from ice. There was a sheer drop off the other side into the Henderson Burn, and we

had a few anxious moments negotiating an overhanging bulge. As soon as it was possible we dropped down to a small tarn about 2,000 feet above the Henderson Burn, which was fed from a melting snowfield across which a three-inch woolly black caterpillar was travelling as though he hadn't a care in the world. Perhaps he thought he was heading for the pole. We sidled, dropping under bluffs and passing four cows. A mile further on we came to the saddle between the Henderson Burn and the Wapiti River. Dad and Ian glassed the cirque behind a blue lake which drains into Wapiti River while I took some photographs. Beyond we could see the peaks of the Glaisnock.

It was four o'clock and from here we had to climb almost to the top of a mountain to get round to the tops above Waipiti River and Lake Sutherland. The valley walls surrounding Lake Sutherland are very steep and can only be climbed in a few places. Hurrying down to the saddle we turned again towards the Lugarburn and wound our way down through a series of benches and bluffs. Two cows moved down ahead of us breaking into a gallop as they reached the grass and scrub in the head basin. They soon disappeared into the bush. We paused for a while to photograph keas and examine an old camp site in the ribbonwood, then moved quietly down the valley stalking the clearings. We were nearly back at camp when through the trees we saw a young cow which Ian shot. As the meat back at camp was from an old beast—and tough, each meal being followed by a session with toothpicks we quickly had two legs in the pack and were on our way. It was dusk when the keas greeted us back and a welcome sight they were. A cheery fire, sizzled steak, some rice and a cup of coffee worked wonders. Aches and pains were forgotten and we felt well content. As the embers died in the fire sounds of snoring filled the tent. The sun sleeps only briefly at this time of the year and daylight would see us heading up Inaccessible Creek, not much of a way to spend a New Year's Day some might say—but perhaps I was one of a privileged few.

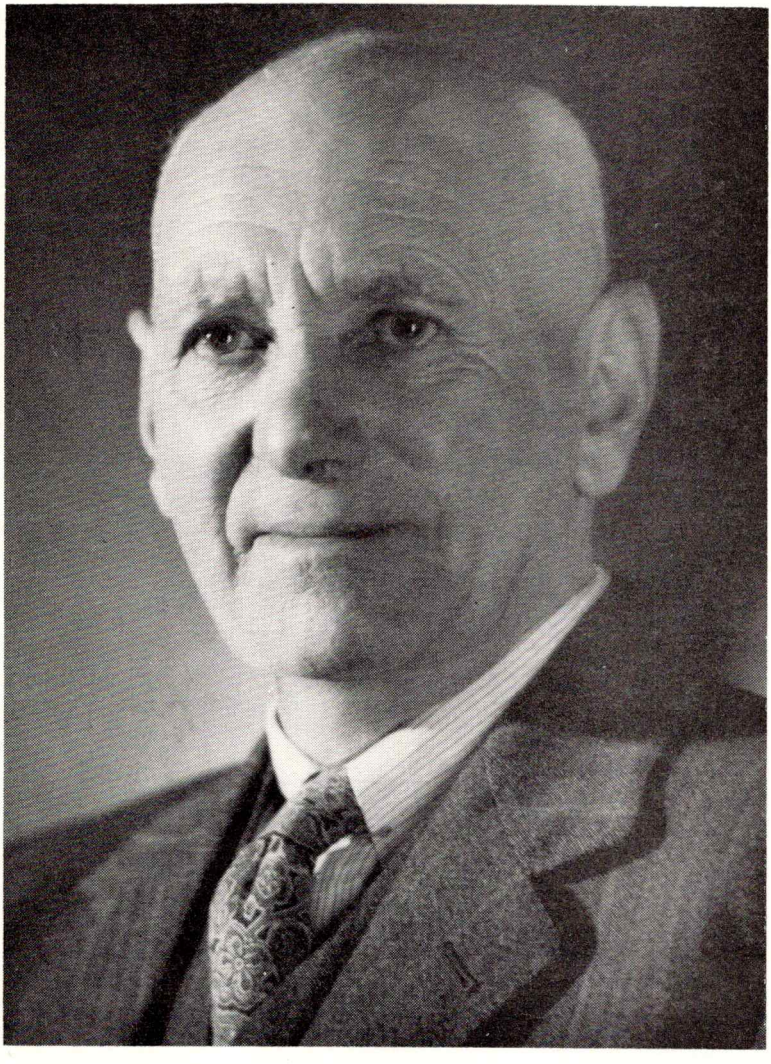
FALLOW DEER ANTLERS

A Correction.—In issue 4 and on page 25 there is depicted a fallow deer head with a greater antler length of $31\frac{1}{4}$ inches and with the spread given as $27\frac{1}{4}$ inches. This spread measurement should read $32\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Would readers please correct their copies.

Also, as a matter of general interest, does any reader know of another fallow deer head taken in New Zealand with the extreme antler measurements for length and spread each exceeding 31 inches, i.e., exceeding 31 x 31?

If so, *N.Z. Wildlife* will be pleased to record it.



MR. A. SUTHERLAND

The death occurred recently at his residence, Lower Hutt, of Alexander Sutherland, lately of "Ngaipu", Hinakura.

The older son of the late Mr. and Mrs. David Sutherland, of Lyall Bay and Hinakura, Alexander Sutherland was born at

Moeraki, which was then part of Ngaipu Station, Hinakura, on December 14, 1883, and was one of a family of six, having three sisters and two brothers.

He was educated at Wellington College between 1897 and 1900. Being very keen on sports and gaining a place in the First Fifteen in his last year, he was also a keen runner, holding the under-16 100-yard record for many years. He left college on his 17th birthday and was almost immediately left in charge of the station while his father left for a trip to England and Scotland. On his father's return, Alex carried on as his father considered he had made a good job in his absence. It was after he left college in December, 1900, that the deer at Ngaipu became numerous and Alex started his stalking for heads and meat.

A keen interest in the early development and settlement of the Wairarapa and Wellington districts led to the publication of his widely known family history *The Sutherlands of Ngaipu.*

In 1911 a shooting range was built at Ngaipu. The first meeting of the club elected Alex captain. This club operated every Saturday until war started in 1914. In 1924 he took up a wapiti block and became a well known Fiordland identity during the next ten years. After spending 70 years at Ngaipu, Hinakura, he retired to Lower Hutt where he has since lived.

Some years ago, he became patron of the Wellington Branch of the N.Z.D.A. and was a very generous and respected patron.

NEW ZEALAND WILD LIFE

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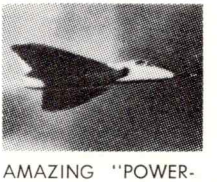

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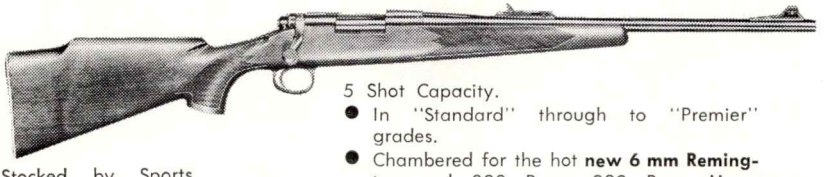

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R.5

THE TROPHY POTENTIAL OF AUSTRALIAN DEER HEADS

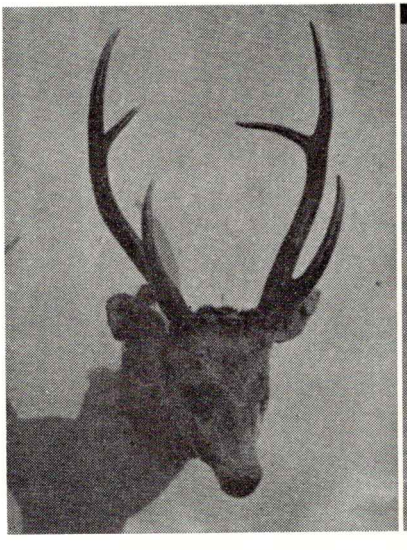
By Gordon Alford

Australian Member of the Headquarters and Overseas Branch

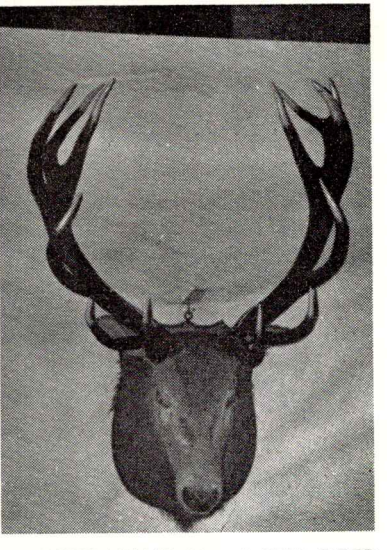
It is only over the last two or three years that Australian deer heads have received any recognition overseas as far as trophy standard is concerned.

Whilst our herds have not flourished to the extent that perhaps they should have in comparison to similar introductions in other countries, several heads of world class measurements have been produced.

Prior to 1960, very little at all was known overseas about our deer. In fact, few overseas hunters knew that deer even existed in Australia.



AUSTRALIA'S No. 1 HOG DEER
$17\frac{1}{2}$" x $13\frac{1}{4}$"
Douglas Score $112\frac{3}{4}$



AUSTRALIA'S No. 1 RED DEER
$35\frac{5}{8}$" x $30\frac{5}{8}$"
Douglas Score $304\frac{5}{8}$

Due to the compiling of the *Official List of Australian Deer Heads* by the Australian Deerhunters Association, and a certain amount of publicity by the Crocodile and Big Game Hunters Club, the matter has been rectified somewhat and has no doubt caused some surprise.

At the present time, six varieties of deer are hunted in this country and all have produced heads of trophy class.

It is interesting to note that the present Australian record heads were all taken within the last two to three years. It is quite possible that most of these heads will be again bettered before many seasons have passed.

This raises an interesting question. Is the quality of the heads improving and bigger heads being grown, or is the answer the fact that Australian deer hunters are much more head conscious than they were three or four years ago?

In other words, keen men looking for record heads are not satisfied with the smaller stags they would have previously shot, and are constantly striving to locate those big mature stags. This proves that a keener interest in the quality of the heads is extremely beneficial to the deer herds. Does are left entirely alone and the small stags allowed to mature and grow worthwhile heads.

Looking at the six species separately, we must begin with the Red Stag, the premier trophy animal of Europe. Our heads can in no way compare with the giant trophies of Hungary, Poland, Argentine and New Zealand. However, they can compare favourably and even better, with the present day Scottish stags. It is possible to secure a very attractive red deer trophy in this country. By this I mean heads of 12, 14 and 16 points with a length of 34 to 36 inches.

Australia's best Royal measures 33 inches by 38 inches.

Rusa Deer are represented by several first class herds. The country is ideally suited for these herds and heads are being produced in world class. This is most encouraging as the Rusa is considered a fine sporting animal. Heads over 30 inches in length are considered in trophy class.

Fallow would be the most widely distributed of all our deer. All states, except Western Australia, have Fallow herds. On the whole the head quality is not good, but this does not mean that attractive trophies cannot be obtained. A nicely palmated even fallow head is one of the most attractive of all deer trophies and most of the keen deerstalkers in Australia have taken reasonable heads.

Axis, the most beautiful of all the deer species, is very rare in this country. Only a few herds exist in the Southern Hemisphere. Perhaps not enough heads have been taken to sum the situation up accurately. However, at this stage it would appear that our heads are not equal to the big Axis trophies of India, but are the equal of anything obtainable in Ceylon at the present time.

No. 1 Chital 31" x 22⅝", Douglas Score 177.

Sambar, another Indian deer, and the largest of all our species is widely distributed throughout Victoria. He is hunted hard, both by stalkers and hound men, yet is holding his own and spreading throughout the mountainous country. A big Sambar head is an impressive sight—wide, heavy, and usually with very well developed brow tines. Big heads are most certainly obtainable, but a terrific amount of hard work and skillful stalking is required before a trophy class Sambar will fall to your rifle. Our top heads are in the 33 to 36 inch class and it is hard to visualise just how impressive these heads are.

Our Hog Deer herd is something we can really be proud of. It is the only true wild herd of this species in existence, outside its natural habitat of India, Burma and Ceylon. We have only the

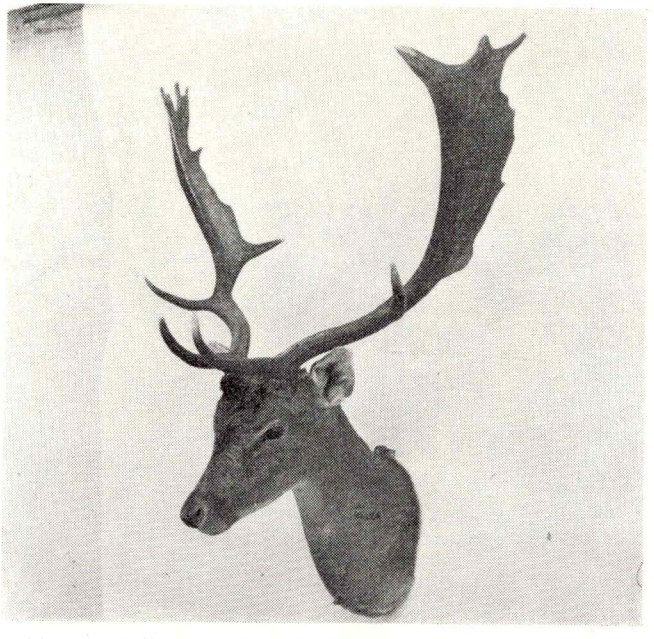
No. 1 Rusa 33¼" x 28", Douglas Score 207.

one herd confined to Southern Victoria. The thick swampy country is ideal for Hog Deer and they have done very well.

Rowland Ward lists the official world record as 21⅝ inches. Australia's top head is 17¼ inches. However, the writer has several cast antlers in his possession in excess of this measurement. These were picked up whilst Hog Deer hunting in Gippsland. If the stag that carried the biggest of these had a matching pair, which was probably the case, the head would definitely have been in world class.

To summarise the situation generally, we have arrived at the following conclusion:—

Red Deer.—Heads of 14 and 16 points will continue to be taken. The length leaves a lot to be desired. A good head over 40 inches has yet to be taken in Australia.



No. 1 Fallow 26" x 26¾", Douglas Score 222½.

Rusa Deer.—Classic heads 33 to 35 inches in length have been taken over the last few years. Rowland Ward lists the world record as 37½ inches. Who is to say that this record will not be bettered here in Australia.

Fallow Deer.—Big even fallow heads are few and far between in this country. Five or six first class heads have been taken. However, it is doubtful if a head in real world class will be taken here.

Axis Deer.—The least known of our six varieties. One head over 30 inches has been taken, this is a first class trophy. The writer is of the opinion that a world class Axis head over 36 inches could be taken in Australia.

Sambar Deer.—The big Indian Sambar around the 50 inches mark are trophies of the past. These days any Sambar over 40 inches would be considered world class. Bigger heads are being taken each year in this country. A 40 inch head is by no means an impossibility.

Hog Deer.—A Hog Deer of world class has not yet been taken here, but the potential is there and a head over 20 inches will eventually be taken.

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Calibres: ·243 Win., ·270 Win., ·30/ 06, ·308 Win. and ·308 Norma Magnum. Barrel length, 22″ overall; length: 42″, Magazine 5 shot (4 shot in ·308 Magnum) Weight 7½ lbs.

The Safari De Luxe has all the basic features of the Super but features a snobble fore-end (not two tone) and has the standard Mauser Double pull trigger. Same calibres as the Super.
The Safari Standard is without recoil pad and, although drilled for, it is not fitted with scope mount blocks. It has the standard Mauser Safety Catch but Parker Hale Safety Catches can be supplied if a scope sight is required to be fitted. Calibres ·308 Win. and ·30/ 06 only.

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Photo K. Whitelaw

Fred Whitelaw rock hopping a small creek on the way out.

ONE RAINY DAY

By Kevin Whitelaw

The air was terrifically damp smelling as the new morning dawned misty and cold on the second day of our shooting trip in a well known river valley in North Canterbury.

Five minutes later the familiar putter of the primus together with the choking odour of white spirits filled the N.Z.D.A. hut as Dick, Fred, and Tony rolled from their sleeping bags and lazily sat at the edge of the bunks yawning, shivering and muttering.

Soon the air became thick and heavy inside the hut and when one opened the door, hordes of scavenging sandfles woudl pour in to set down upon four humans huddled around a portable radio receiving the news from the outside world along with the not so pleasant weather report.

We sat and consumed our burnt beans which we managed to wash down with a brew of tea as the first spots of rain spattered against the hut roof and window, we all knew that the day ahead was not to be a tropical one. But trusting it wouldn't rain too much, or perhaps it was because we were keen and foolish hunters, Dick, brother Fred and myself decided to go through to the mist shrouded tops near the hut to try our luck at the nimble chamois.

Seven o'clock was the time. We managed to leave the hut with the rain easing off as we made our way through the thick stunted undergrowth. Mistletoe lay draped over massive spreading beech trees at different intervals adding to the glamour of the native flora. After breaking free of the bush we forged over a couple of brows towards a secluded spot where a small tarn lay. Once we reached the tarn we decided to settle down and have a brew of tea and figure out our next move.

Our high hopes were somewhat deterred now owing to the amount of rain that was persistently falling, and I decided to turn back and retrace my steps to the hut for I was soaked to the skin and extremely cold. But Fred and Dick were determined to carry on, so what else could I do, but follow.

Icy winds blew furiously from the high tops as long snowgrass wrapped and entangled itself around our bare legs while we made tracks up a slight gut to a low saddle ahead. Fog came and went and it was during a fog-free break that Fred, who was leading, beckoned us to halt. I trudged on from behind with pack and on reaching the saddle found that Dick and Fred had set their gaze upon a large chamois which wandered to the edge of a rough, rocky creek and settled down to survey the now semi-surrounding area from the cover of snowgrass along with other mountain vegetation that blended with its skin giving it near complete protection.

Sitting there, watching this monarch of the mountains sent a thrill right down one's spine, and we soon realised it was on its own as further eye straining showed nothing else near at hand. It was decided Fred was to take the shot, there was no cover about, and the distance was 200-300 yards and with the rain starting to fall again, it made the stalk no easier. Fred slipped over the crest of the saddle as the wind blasted into our faces with the rain getting harsher and heavier all the time. Dick and I watched Fred carefully

and ever so cautiously drop below out of our vision to enable him to lessen the distance.

Unfortunately, I had left the 35 mm carema along with telephoto lens at the hut and was kicking myself as the buck chamois shifted its head from side to side. Seconds ticked away, revolving into many dragging minutes. The chamois was now looking in our direction and I had the uneasy feeling that it knew that danger was close by.

Dick and I watched through our telescopic rifle sights and studied the chamois carefully and thoroughly, truly a majestic beast and this one was definitely a trophy any hunter would be proud of.

Waiting was followed by more waiting as the rain teemed down. A thought ran through my mind that Fred's scope sight had fogged up but this thought was soon shattered when a dull boom rang out over the mountain and the chamois was flipped onto its back with legs kicking similar to the frantic procedure that follows once a sheep has become cast.

We went over the saddle and found Fred rolling a smoke about 100 yards from where the chamois lay, this being the spot he had shot from. After discussing the wind change and several other incidents during the stalk we traversed the creek and reached the opposite bank on which the chamois lay and to our amazement discovered Fred had shot the beast through the eye using a 150 Gr. Winchester Silvertip bullet of .308 cal.

The long black horns had superb hooks and the skin was beautifully marked. Both Dick and I reckoned on the horns being $9\frac{1}{4}$ inch, which is a good trophy.

I was lucky in having the black and white camera with me, so I took a few photographs of brother Fred with the animal and directly after this set about skinning the chamois. Chamois are usually, as a rule, tough to skin, compared with a deer and as Fred wanted the skin for a rug, I took a little extra care during the skinning operation. It was 20 minutes later that Fred dropped the skin in the pack together with the horns and we began moving back towards the hut.

Knob followed knob and brow upon brow until we finally reached the irregular bush line and began the trek downwards to the valley floor. Rain was still falling as we made our way through the bush and we were not sorry to get a glimpse of the hut not so far ahead.

Photo K. Whitelaw.

F. Whitelaw with his fine Chamois, length 9⅝ in.

Tony was fast asleep in the bunk, like a new born babe, when we arrived at the hut, but quickly awoke when the primus started cooking the dinner for us, and we related the day on the tops to him over a nice brew of tea.

New Zealand Bird Portraits, by M. F. Soper.

Deerstalkers and others interested in the wildlife of New Zealand have been long aware of the excellence of Dr. Soper's bird photography. This magazine has in fact featured his work since its inception.

Dr. Soper has now presented the public with a book not only featuring his photographic art, but also his observations on the life of the birds concerned. His advice on the techniques of bird photography will be of assistance to our members who follow this pastime, and the fund of information on the life of these birds will surely stimulate many more of us to a greater interest.

The photographs are superb, the reproductions excellent and the prose interesting and enjoyable to read.

This book is printed by Whitcombe and Tombs and priced at 28s. 6d.

BRANCH NOTES

TAIHAPE

In the early part of 1962 we were having trouble getting a room to hold our monthly meetings. We would have a room booked and when we arrived, find another meeting in progress and have to have one of our members there to direct our members to some other place. As this happened all too often, it was suggested by our President, Mr. McKinnon, that we should build a hall of our own, if we could find a section.

On 28 May, 1962, we had our first meeting of our hall committee and decided that before we could do anything, we must have a section. We decided on a section down by the Hautapu River, if we could persuade the Borough Council to let us have it. We approached the Council and they were agreeable for us to have it on condition we paid survey fees. After the trouble of getting it surveyed, the Council found it did not belong to them. The Public Works were the owners. We were referred to the Public Works, Wanganui. Our application went to Wanganui and as far as they were concerned we could have it, but consent would have to come from Wellington. We got a reply from Wellington saying under the law they would have to give it to Taihape Borough Council and the Council could lease it to us. This was arranged.

We then called another meeting to decide what kind of hall we should build and of what materials (our President had concrete works alongside our building site). He offered to loan his block machine to us, to use Saturday afternoon and Sunday if we decided to build in blocks. We decided to build in blocks! There were enough logs donated for all timber required and our first working bee started making building blocks the next Saturday afternoon and Sunday. On 6 June, we had enough blocks to start building. It was decided to start boxing on 13 June, and Mr. Eric Coleman, a local builder, came down and gave us our levels. We were so keen that we started to put in boxing without our permit to build to hand, as the Borough Council assured us we could collect it at the office at 10 o'clock. Before 10 o'clock we arrived, the building inspector arrived and asked who gave us permission to start building. We assured him we would be able to produce it at 10 o'clock. He soon knocked us back on that! When we filled in form for permit, we had to put in value of building, so we put in what we thought cost of materials would be, which would amount to about £900. But the inspector said all he was interested in was value of building when it was finished and his value was £1,800 and would not sign until we agreed to his valuation. We were trying to keep the price of our permit down. However, we had to agree to this, so up to office, altered valuation, got our permit and went on with the good work.

On 27 June, Tew Bason and Duncun Greer, two members, came with their tractors to push earth from a small hill to the front of the hall to bring it up to floor level. By this time we had concrete foundations in and on Saturday, 30 June, we had a big gang of members to start laying blocks. On Sunday, another big gang carried on and by night had blocks up to window height. In spite of bad weather, we were able to get the roof on the following weekend.

So it came to inside work. Money was raised by many means and with additional help from the Acclimatisation Branch, which offered a big donation, were assured of about £600, and so were able to start on the iside at once.

A lot of our members were a bit out of their depth with this sort of work. However, there were a few of us able to carry on and put in odd days in between our farmwork and by 8 December we were far enough advanced to hold a Ladies' Night and also a send-off to one of our popular members, Wally Brenden and family. Wally was transferred from the Navy Camp to England. What made Wally so popular was being editor of our monthly magazine called "Camp Fire News" sent out to every financial member and now we know how much of his time Wally put into this.

The President, Secretary and a few members, with the help of Mrs. Ron Kilgour, to do the typing, get the magazine out each month and it takes a few hours to get ready for post. Wally still takes an interest in the branch and received the magazine and sent quite a big donation towards plastering the hall.

After this, we had a break for Christmas and started again on 10 January, 1963, and we were far enough advanced to open the hall on 3 March. We had murals painted on wall by Chum Beran and he made a splendid job. The hall itself is 40 feet by 25 feet, with entrance hall 10 feet by 10 feet, a large kitchen with sink and bench with large Zip over same, electric stove, and plenty of cupboards. Ladies' toilet and basin at one end and Gents' toilet at the other end.

I have been praising the efforts of our members, but will also mention the help we received from outsiders such as plumbers, electricians, Borough Council members, transport operators. In fact, anyone we went to for advice or help never refused us if they could help in any way.

So, on behalf of the Branch, we thank them one and all.

WESTERN SOUTHLAND

During August, 1963, a new branch was formed in Western Southland. Since the branch was formed meetings have been held alternatively at Otautau, Riverton, Tuatapere and Ohai. It has been decided to continue with this practice to give coverage to a wide district. The following executice was elected at our first meeting which was held at Otautau.

President: D. B. Banwell; Senior Vice-President: M. Anderson; Junior Vice-President: G. Sim; Secretary: W. E. Mellon; Treasurer: S. C. Rodgers; Committee: J. H. Templeton, D. Cleghorn, D. Heenan, N. Ryan, I. W. Macfarlane, E. N. Elder, A. T. Armstrong, J. Dickson.

The committee has been active and several projects have been put into operation or are in the course of operation. A picnic was held at Lake Monowai, where a range shoot was held and boat trips provided. An enjoyable day resulted. A rifle safety course was held just prior to the Christmas holidays and much work was put into this by a special committee.

A recent visit to Tuatapere by Jack McKenzie, who was kind enough to show films, raised a sum of money which will eventually be built up to provide accommodation for hut building in the country to the west. Preparations are being made for the erection of a hut at the Hump, and it is hoped to follow this up with huts on Lake Hauroko.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

You well know the interest sustained not only in hunters of the mountain of the Commission of International Hunters' Council, but again the hunters of the mountains of France to the activities of the N.Z.D.A.

Thanks to information furnished by this Association. I have been able in a book entitled "Faune and Hunters in the Mountains" to give different information which has awakened lively interest in France and Spain, in

that which concerns game and more especially the trophies obtained in your islands.

For the aforesaid I thank you very much for sending the three first issues of your new magazine "Wildlife" and let me repeat something which I believe to be an error in Issue No. 2, pages 38 and 39, which is concerning the horns of chamois: "The decisions taken . . . etc."

If your hunters compare their trophies based on the calculations that you indicate, they will arrive at differences which could be considerable. I believe that it is necessary for you to rectify the explanations given for measuring horns of chamois on this point.

To help you, I attach the slip of measurements which the Association of Hunters of the Mountain distributes to its members.

Please pass on the best wishes of my Association to yours and tell them that before the end of my life I hope to have time to come and admire in your country the beautiful game which live there.

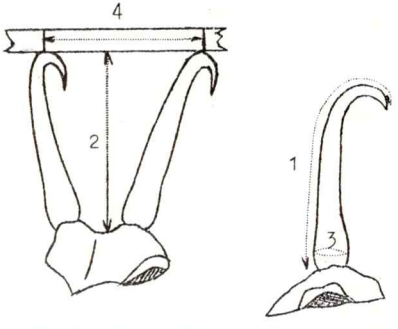
Best wishes.

Signed,
CLAUDE CHAVANE,
President.
Association Des Chasseurs
De Montagne, Paris.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TAKING MEASUREMENTS

1. Average of the length of the two horns. Measured from the root of the case on the anterior curve, as far as the point of the hook.
2. Height of the horns. Measured from the join of the skull, between the two cases, as far as the highest part of the curve of the hooks. This spot is determined by a ruler placed on the top of the curving.
3. Circumference of the thickest case. Measured to the thickest part, there contained the resin. One can cut off a maximum of 5 points, after the thickness of the resin.
4. Removal of the horns. Height difference of the middle of the cases, measured to the top of the curve. For horns which have irregular spread, these ones must not be rated greater than the height.

(See diagram.)



26 Marine Parade,
Herne Bay,
Auckland.
3/1/1964.

Dear Sir,

Like Mr. H. Kingsford (your writer of an article criticising the Douglas system of recording antlers) I am no expert but unlike your critic, I believe we should keep criticism constructive and not destructive.

Mr. Kingsford claims that no one with common sense will deny that visual judgment is the basis of any judgment.

If this were so, surely it must rest with the individual as to his own personal assessment of quality. One thing is certain and that is many of us have by-passed stags that others would think are top class.

No true trophy hunter would take a 17-pointer with short tines and little length in preference to perhaps a 12-pointer of the calibre of Athel Hood's great Waiatoto head photographed in an earlier issue the "The Roar".

How often have we heard people, when admiring perhaps a 15-pointer, say, "what a pity it has not got the extra corresponding point on the other side."

Surely this proves that in the minds of as many people as not, they have discounted that extra point, so it must be personal opinion, but this does not help any recording system.

Even though I have the utmost respect for Mr. Douglas, in the past I have not entirely agreed with his system, so probing the matter further I must confess I disagreed with his system purely because it penalised the best head that I have ever shot, but after much thought must agree that the Douglas system is the fairest system I can think of. None of us is happy about any recording system that scores our own trophy lower than it appears to ourselves.

Mr. Kingsford says "Let us have a system of our very own, even one that can be changed, if necessary". Surely this statement lacks the common sense that he speaks of earlier in his letter. If his system is so much superior to the Douglas one, it would surely not need changing.

What most people fail to realise is that Mr. Douglas had no intention of entering into any personal differences regarding the merits of individual trophies, but formulated his system merely to record the great heads for the future generations.

In conclusion, let us all therefore be primarily sportsmen and uphold the standards that are expected of us by our Association and also recognise the system that our organisation has accepted as the best system of recording the truly great heads that have been shot in this country.

There must come a time in our Association when Mr. Douglas's willingness to help others in the field of taxidermy, tanning and sound advice generally is placed well above petty prejudices.

Yours sincerely,
Frank Meier.

Dear Sir,

The basis of the Douglas Score spread-factor deadlines has already been explained several times in publications, the last being in the same issue of "New Zealand Wildlife" (No. 4), as contained Mr. Kingsford's letter. To those who will take the trouble to find out first it will be apparent that these deadlines are actually based on the "Maker's" work, to use Mr. Kingsford's own definition, rather than upon any dreamhead of my own.

The suggestion that a 17-pointer is necessarily better than a 16, reminds me of those heads I have seen with the odd tines sawn off and dressed up!

So far as I know, the Douglas Score is the only system in the world that measures and records every tine on a deer head. It does not record any twice. However, the implication in Mr. Kingsford's letter is probably based on the fact that the Douglas Score also records the true length of each antler. To do this, we measure along the main beam and out to the end of the longest tine on top, whichever this might happen to be. To measure any lesser point would not give the true length, but a false length. In many cases of red deer antlers, the true length goes to the back-tines on top, while in others it goes to the Royal-tines.

In some cases the true length goes to the Royal-tine on one top and to some other tine, or combination of tines, on the other top. If a little thought is given to the matter it will be seen that to obtain the true antler lengths, and also the true tine counterparting, and tine lengths of every type of head, it is essential to proceed in the manner of the Douglas Score. If Mr. Kingsford can see another way of obtaining the truth in all these cases, will he please write again and explain how it is done.

Mr. Kingsford's suggestion that we should use a constantly changing system makes interesting reading! If the manufacturers of foot rulers made their product a constantly changing length, what would be the value of a yard?

Please read page 53 of the Douglas Score Handbook.

Yours sincerely,
Norman Douglas.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Every book or pamphlet on deerstalking, mountaineering, etc., brings in the question of food. Dehydrated food in packet or tin. Bacon, butter, bread, tea, and what have you. The one great food never mentioned and if necessary the only food one need ever take into the bush is never mentioned. Millet. As an emergency measure it is unsurpassable. It is in fact completely life sustaining in itself without anything else whatsoever. It is possible to live out one's life solely on Millet and finish up as healthy as one in a million. Millet is light and easy to eat. I speak of ground or hulled millet, not millet seed. Let me give you a few facts.

Millet is the principal grain of Eastern Europe, Africa, Siberia and China, and has been for hundreds of years. Millet and not rice is the basic food of most of the Chinese and look what it has done for their population. The millet eaters are the big robust fellows. Rice is not a complete food.

Millet is a completely balanced grain. Non-fattening, non-acid forming and rich in high grade protein, minerals and vitamins. No food digests as easily, does not ferment in the stomach, causes no distress in the digestive tract. Is a known cure for ulcerated stomach.

It was found in Russia after World War I that the Russians were in better health then ever before after months on millet alone.

It is the only food one can have a belly full of and yet go straight up to 10,000 ft without discomfort. By adding skim milk powder, it becomes a true substitute for meat.

It troubles me that this grain is not mentioned and included in all advice on food.

One pound of millet is equal to 20 helpings, 7-days rations. One pound in weight for 7 days hunting is good going in any one's language.

This grain can be bought at any Health Store. It must be hulled or ground.

How to Cook

Half a pint of water, 1 heaped tablespoon of millet. Put billy on to boil. Sprinkle millet over water and keep stirring until porridge boils, then simmer for 3 minutes. Or bring water to boil, sprinkle in millet and simmer for 5 minutes. This method is likely to lump a little but is more convenient, those fires get hot. Add salt or make with milk, use sugar, cream, etc. if you wish, but can be eaten straight cold or hot and can be carried cold for days. It is the only food that leaves my war guts alone and that's saying something.

Good luck!

OLLIE.

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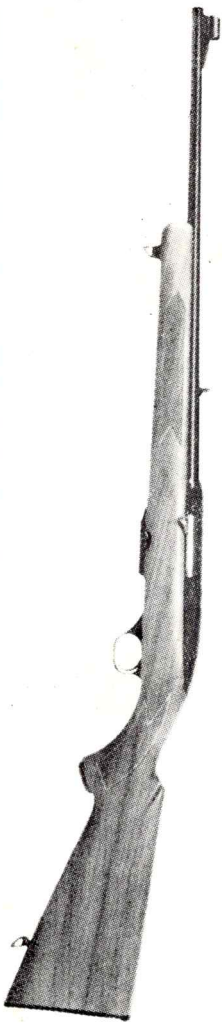

THE MODEL 100 is one of the fastest-shooting hunting rifles in the world. Created to fill the need for a really accurate, dependable automatic hunting rifle, the Model 100 handles with a natural ease with an absolute minimum of recoil to keep those following shots on target. Calibres: 243 Win., 284 Win., 308 Win. Suggested Retail Price: £82.13.6d.

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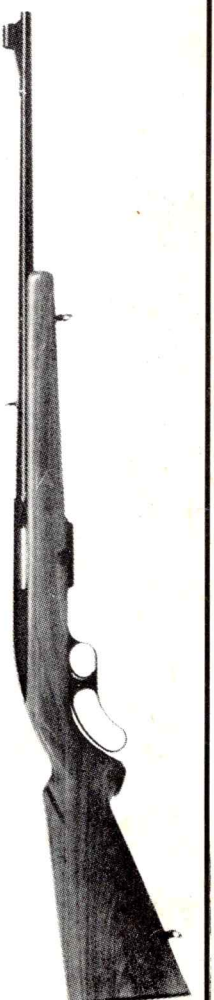

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